

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Midland School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2001-2002**

Team Members: Victoria Bantam, Education Specialist and Angela Boddicker, Program Representative

Dates of On Site Visit: November 4, 2002

Date of Report: November 12, 2002

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Office of Special Education. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not Applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Child find and screening articles
- Screening activities
- Comprehensive plan
- Teacher assistance team referrals
- Referral data

- State data tables
- Student file reviews
- Child count data
- Personnel data

Meets Requirements

The Midland School District's policies and procedures support the items listed under general supervision. The district's policies are consistent with Office of Special Education standards. The school district provides special education services to all eligible students within their school district. The district participates in child find and screening activities to identify students with special needs. Parents receive their due process rights and all parent referrals are followed by evaluation. Parents participate in the planning of student evaluations. The district has policies and procedures in place for making student referrals and all referrals are documented.

The special education staff is certified and provided with training for working with students that have special needs. The district is implementing performance testing in accordance to Office of Special Education guidelines and information gathered from assessments is used to identify student progress. The drop out rate for students that have special needs is at 0%.

The district has policies and procedures in place for the following: placement of students out of district and suspension and expulsion of students with disabilities.

Needs Improvement

The steering committee stated that the staff needed more time to adequately analyze student progress. The district's steering committee indicated a need for additional training in intervention, pre-referral and the referral process. The committee also felt the district should implement parent, staff, and student advisory groups for special education programs.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team was in agreement with all the items presented by the steering committee in the meets requirements area.

Needs Improvement

The monitoring team agreed with the items listed by the steering committee in the category of areas that need improvement.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child

reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Child find articles
- Screening announcements
- Child count
- Parental rights notification
- Student file review
- Parent surveys
- District policy
- Suspension/Expulsion Data Table C

Meets Requirements

The Midland School District's comprehensive plan has policies and procedures in place to ensure that a free appropriate public education is being provided to all students. The district provides parents with parental rights notice. The district provides policies and procedures for the suspension and expulsion of students and files suspension and expulsion records with the state.

The steering committee indicated that procedures are in place for child find activities, screenings, referral and the development of annual individual educational plans. These procedures ensure effective programming in meeting the student's needs. The district maintains data and accountability for the district's child count.

The staff is knowledgeable in techniques and methods to do positive behavior supports and strategies for students.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team was in agreement with the items listed in the meets requirement area.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan

- MDT/eligibility report
- Prior notice/consent
- Student file review
- Personnel records/certification
- Disabling condition Data Table G
- Child count data
- Staff surveys

Meets Requirements

The Midland School District comprehensive plan includes policies and procedures to ensure parental rights are in place and initial evaluations and reevaluations are made available to all students, who are suspected of a disability. The parental rights include written notice and consent to evaluate and parental input into the planning of evaluations.

The district's evaluation procedures include the following: comprehensive evaluation, the use of valid tests, tests that are administered by trained personnel, appropriate tests given, the student is evaluated in all areas of suspected disability, more than one evaluation instrument is utilized and the student is assessed in their native language or interpreter used if necessary.

Procedures are implemented to prevent racial or cultural discrimination. The district has procedures in place for English as a second language, but it is currently not applicable. The district utilizes evaluation results to determine eligibility and designs individual educational plans for eligible students.

The district's evaluations are completed within designated timelines and parents are provided with a copy of the test results.

Current evaluation practices include appropriate committee members, time lines, and reevaluation notices and reviews.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team found the school district to be utilizing valid assessments and trained personnel in providing evaluations for students with special needs. The district uses more than one instrument for evaluation of students and students are evaluated in all areas of suspected disability.

The monitoring team could not validate that appropriate procedures for evaluation and consent to evaluate were followed. The monitoring team has moved these items to the "out of compliance area".

ARSD 24:05:30:17 Prior Notice Consent to Evaluate

The review team located two files where consent to evaluate was not obtained. In one file the student was given evaluations in motor and behavior, but assessments were not listed on the consent form. In another student file the student was given speech/language evaluation, but consent was not given.

In one student file the 25 day evaluation period had been extended, but there was no documentation that the parent had agreed to the extension.

ARSD 24:05:25:04 Evaluation Procedures

A multidisciplinary team meeting is required when reviewing a student suspected of a specific learning disability. The appropriate team membership consists of a general educator, parent and diagnostic evaluator. For one student there was no general educator in attendance at the meeting.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Student file reviews
- Administrator survey
- Parent survey
- Prior notice/consent
- FERPA publication
- Complaint data Table (L)
- Due process data table

Meets Requirements

The comprehensive plan has policies and procedures in place to ensure procedural safeguards and parental rights are not violated. The Midland School District Comprehensive Plan is approved by the state and follows, both state and federal guidelines. The comprehensive plan includes policies in regard to independent educational evaluation. The staff has had training to assist them in the development and implementation of procedural safeguards.

The district has policies and procedures in place to guarantee the child has been informed of parental rights a year before the student reaches the age of majority.

The school district has policies and procedures in place to handle formal complaints and due process hearings.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team was in agreement with the statements in the meets requirements category.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Administrators survey
- Teacher survey
- Parent survey
- Student file review
- SAT 9 data table

Meets Requirements

The Midland School District has policies and procedures in place to meet the state and federal regulations in regards to developing an individualized educational plan for students with special needs.

The IEP includes all necessary information and appropriate team membership is present for IEP meetings. The district has policies and procedures in place to support the IEP team.

The district supports and encourages staff to attend workshops, training and classes to assist them in meeting the needs of the students.

Needs Improvement

The district provides opportunity for training but should encourage general education staff to be trained to understand how they can help students that are on IEPs.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team could not validate that the IEP contained all of the required content and has moved these items to the out of compliance area.

Need Improvement

The review team was in agreement with the items listed in the “needs improvement category”.

Out of Compliance

ARSD: 24:05:27:01.03 Content of individualized education program

The present level of performance needs to be linked to evaluation data and include a statement as to how the student’s disability impacts their progress in the general curriculum. On two student IEPs it was not clarified as to how the student’s disability effects their involvement and progress in the general curriculum.

The IEP needs to have annual goals or short term objectives that include the following elements: conditions, performance and criteria. On three students IEPs the short-term objectives did not state these required conditions.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Child count
- Alternative placement Table (F)
- Parent/student survey
- Student file review

Meets Requirements

The district has policies and procedures in place to provide students with instruction in the least restrictive environment. Students are placed in the least restrictive environment based on their individual program needs and the continuum of services. The general educational curriculum/instructional materials have been modified and made available to general education teachers to assist students with special needs in the general education program.

The special education staff has been trained to implement behavioral intervention plans and behavioral planning is being implemented consistently throughout the district.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team validated that general procedures were in place for providing the students a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. However, through staff interview and student input it was indicated that more inclusionary opportunities and classroom accommodations could be provided within the general classroom. The monitoring team has moved least restrictive environment to the needs improvement category.

Needs Improvement

Through student observation and staff interviews the monitoring team validated a need to improve plans for reintegration of students to a less restrictive learning environment. Additional training and consideration needs to be given in implementing the individual program plan within the general classroom.